



Positively Green

Queensland Greenspace Strategy 2011–2020

Protecting our lifestyle,
environment and places to play



Looking forward. Delivering now.

The Department of Local Government and Planning leads a coordinated Queensland Government approach to planning, infrastructure and development across the state.



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Foreword



Paul Lucas MP
Attorney-General, Minister
for Local Government and
Special Minister of State

In March 2010, the Queensland Government held the Queensland Growth Management Summit.

Thousands of people participated in this process and identified new ways to shape a prosperous, sustainable and liveable future for themselves and their families.

The *Queensland Greenspace Strategy 2011-2020* is one of the Queensland Growth Management Summit's key outcomes.

This strategy acts on the greenspace policies of the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031* and is an important milestone in the delivery of the statewide Toward Q2 green target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020.

While preparing this strategy, the government has continued to deliver important nature conservation areas and recreation facilities across the state. Recent achievements include the redevelopment of the former TAFE site on top of the cliffs at Brisbane's Kangaroo Point into a new urban parkland overlooking the Brisbane River with spectacular views across the CBD to the western ranges. This new park complements the well loved Roma Street and South Bank parklands and the City Botanic Gardens.

The new compact urban communities being planned and delivered by the Urban Land Development Authority will ultimately deliver thousands more hectares of community greenspace.

Twenty-three thousand hectares of North Stradbroke Island in Moreton Bay is to be dedicated as national park as sand mining on this iconic island is phased out over the next fifteen years. New national parks have been created in Cape York and other important centres of biodiversity. Protected areas in Moreton Bay Marine Park have also been significantly extended.

Green spaces, whether a national park, surfing beach or local sports field, provide a range of opportunities to improve our health, wellbeing and quality of life and are fundamental to ensuring we have sustainable and vibrant communities. Access to quality greenspace for public recreation will also help Queenslanders to become Australia's healthiest people by 2020. At the regional scale, greenspace preserved between cities and towns sustains our lifestyle and contains urban sprawl.

As Queensland recovers from the natural disasters of early 2011, the Queensland Greenspace Strategy will help the planning and rebuilding in affected areas. It will help to mitigate the effects of future flooding, especially in urban areas.

Queenslanders value our diverse landscapes and natural environment—enjoying a warm climate, beautiful beaches, parks, rivers, reefs and rainforests and stunning outback scenery. The natural attraction of our environment has made our state a highly sought after destination in which to work, live and play.

The Queensland Greenspace Strategy recognises the importance Queenslanders place on our landscapes and open spaces and will play a vital part in delivering a sustainable and prosperous state and maintaining an attractive lifestyle second to none.

Paul Lucas MP
Attorney-General, Minister
for Local Government and
Special Minister of State



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Main photo: Photo: Department of Environment and Resource Management
Smaller photos: Photo: Briony Masters
(left to right) Photo: Peter Lik



Photo: Peter Lik

Introduction

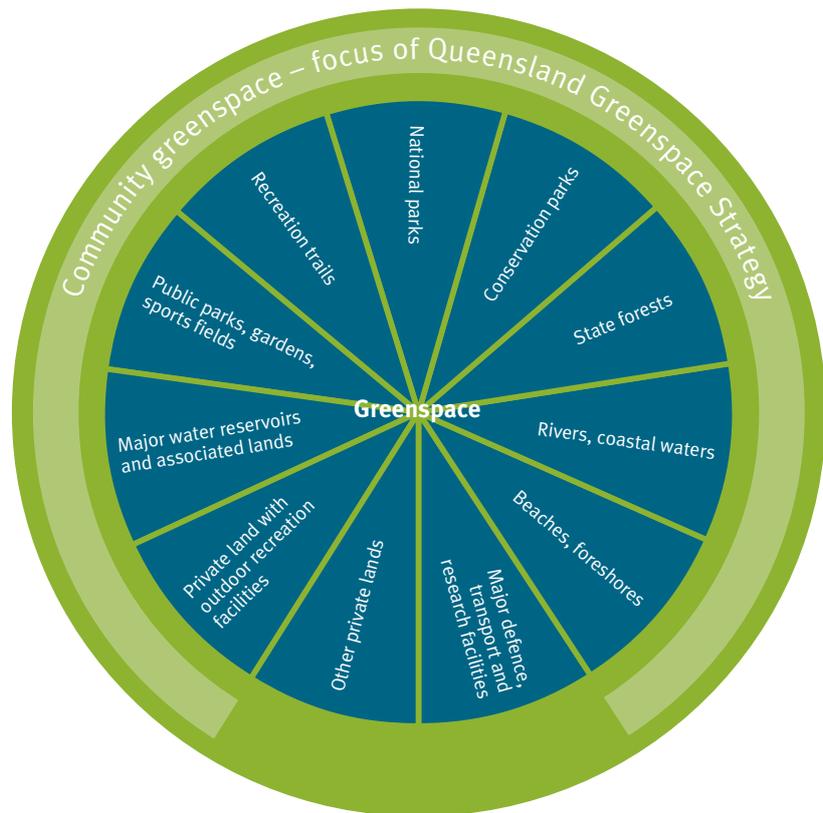
Why we need a Queensland Greenspace Strategy

‘Greenspace’ broadly describes the ‘great outdoors’ and includes the open spaces and landscapes we use as a community to connect to nature and enjoy an active, healthy outdoor lifestyle that is the envy of the world.

Queenslanders recognise that access to greenspace influences the character and liveability of the places where they choose to live, work and play.

The Queensland Greenspace Strategy is a key tool to help secure and provide better public access to greenspace in Queensland.

Figure 1: Greenspace in Queensland





Community greenspace

Community greenspace is land or water that provides community access for outdoor recreation, sport and leisure. Community greenspace reflects the diversity of Queensland and includes:

- almost all of Queensland's coastline, including our world famous surfing beaches
- most of Queensland's territorial coastal waters
- marine parks covering more than 7.2 million hectares
- 286 national parks covering more than eight million hectares or about 4.7 per cent of Queensland
- 220 conservation parks covering more than 68 000 hectares
- more than three million hectares of state forests
- local government parks
- recreation tracks, including rail trails and river trails, Great Walks in national parks and more than 2000 kilometres of Australia's Bicentennial National Trail
- major water supply dams and associated lands where public access is permitted
- commercial caravan parks, camping areas and off-road vehicle parks.

Diversity and opportunity

These places provide a wide range of outdoor recreation settings and opportunities. Community greenspace networks also support other important values such as biodiversity, natural resources, water catchments, scenic amenity and cultural heritage.

For example, the primary role of national parks is to protect biodiversity values. However, access for activities such as bushwalking and camping is permitted where potential impacts can be effectively managed.

Tourism in national and marine parks generates billions of dollars annually for the Queensland economy.

At the other end of the spectrum, playing fields and local urban parklands provide for activities such as outdoor sports, picnicking, skateboarding, community gardens and children's play.

Walking and cycling tracks are increasingly popular in and around urban areas, with walking consistently being the most commonly undertaken outdoor recreation activity.



Photo: Sunshine Coast Council

Climate change—greenspace is part of the solution

Greenspace helps to mitigate the effects of climate change by:

- absorbing carbon dioxide and pollutants
- moderating high temperatures in built-up areas
- mitigating flooding
- buffering sensitive land uses from sea level rise.



Greenspace for growth areas

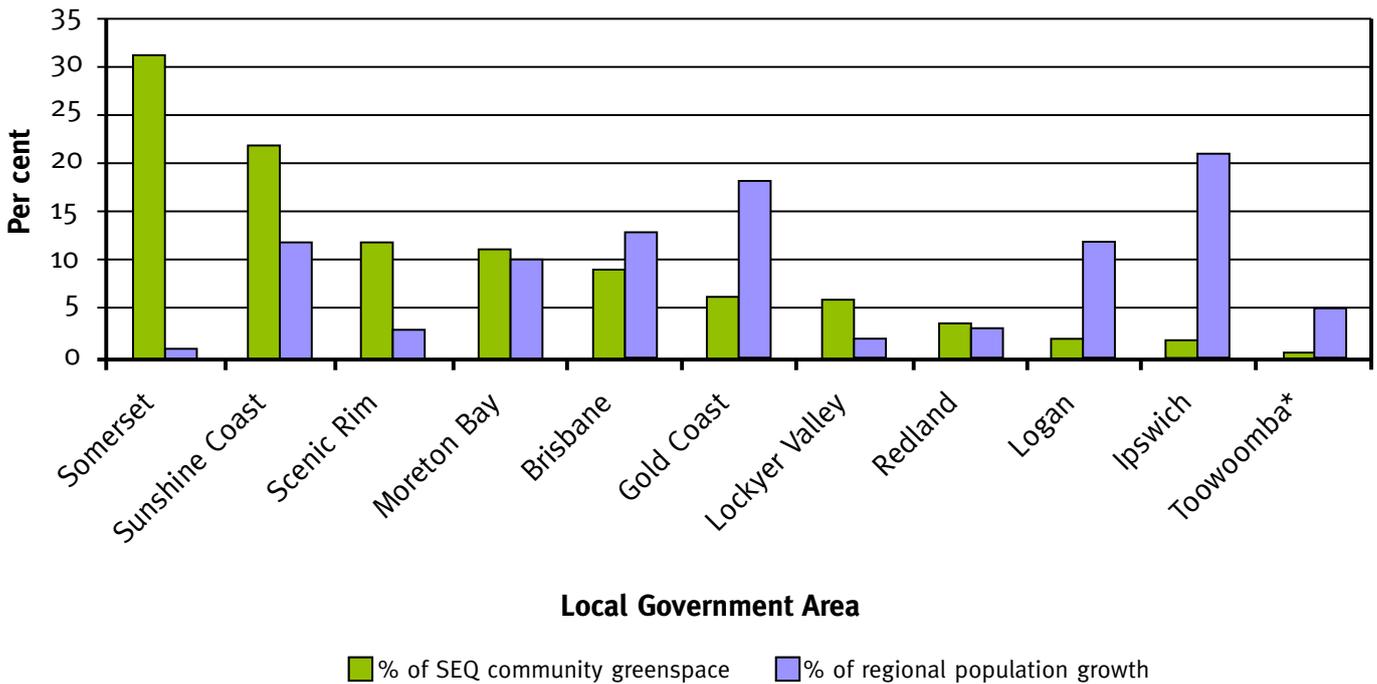
Growing urban communities continue to place pressure on the sustainability and capacity of existing greenspace networks. By 2031, Queensland's population is projected to reach 6.6 million people. This is over 50 per cent more than the 2006 population and will result in significant demand for a wide range of supporting infrastructure, including community greenspace.

Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland

Actions to increase greenspace were identified in *Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland: A response to the Queensland Growth Management Summit*. The response identified greenspace initiatives designed to respond to population growth and increased density, which will be planned and delivered under the Queensland Greenspace Strategy. (www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/growth)

Demand for community greenspace is particularly strong in South East Queensland (SEQ), where most Queenslanders live and where the majority of the state's population growth is occurring.

Figure 2: SEQ greenspace distribution and population growth 2011–2031



*Toowoomba data shown applies only to that selected area of Toowoomba Regional Council located within the designated SEQ region. Greenspace data sourced from the Department of Local Government and Planning, 2011. Population data sourced from Statistical Local Area projections produced by the Office of Statistical and Economic Research, 2011.



What is the government doing?

Leadership

The Queensland Government is playing its part by:

- expanding the national park, marine park and regional park estate
- using regional plans to protect greenspace from urban sprawl
- improving greenspace planning through updated planning regulations
- providing recreational facilities such as urban parklands, waterfront esplanades and visitor use areas
- establishing a statewide inventory of all land held for public recreation
- building regional recreation trails like the Great Walks, Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and the SEQ Horse Trails Network
- setting the Toward Q2 statewide target to increase land for nature conservation and public recreation by 50 per cent by 2020.

Community greenspace achievements

National parks

Since 1990, the Queensland Government has increased the national park estate from around 3.8 million hectares to 8.1 million hectares.

By the end of 2011, 50 per cent of North Stradbroke Island will be national park. This will increase to 75 per cent by 2021 and a further five per cent by 2026. This extensive area of national park will open up previously unseen areas of the island to visitors, allowing them to experience the island's unique wildlife and diverse landscapes.

Six recreation areas declared at Bribie Island, Cooloola, Fraser Island, Green Island, Inskip Peninsula and Moreton Island provide nature-based

recreation opportunities that are carefully planned and managed to protect important nature conservation values.

Strategic planning

Statutory regional plans are being rolled out across the state, including specific policies and programs for delivering community greenspace.

The implementation of *A Strategy for Regional Trails in SEQ 2007* and the *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2010* are delivering on the community greenspace policies of the SEQ Regional Plan.

Community greenspace priorities are being identified in regional natural resource management plans and rural futures strategies.

The Queensland Biodiversity Strategy is being developed to help Queenslanders be better connected to nature by expanding protected areas. Potential new areas will be assessed against guiding principles including identification of essential biodiversity values and consideration of new tourism and recreation opportunities.

New environmental offset policies are being developed to help expand areas for nature conservation.

Outdoor recreation facilities

Another significant community greenspace achievement delivered by the Queensland Government was the recent opening up of over 5000 hectares of land around the new Wyaralong Dam, near Boonah in South East Queensland. This new regional park, now named the Mount Joyce Escape Recreation Park, caters for horse riding, camping and picnicking and features over 40 kilometres of world-class mountain bike trails.

The Queensland Government has also partnered with local governments to

deliver the Queensland Moto Park at Wyaralong, a new 745 hectare facility for off-road motorcycling and the Boonah to Ipswich Trail.

A series of other regionally significant facilities are being planned, funded and delivered across the state, including:

- \$23.3 million project to redevelop the Port of Cairns foreshores
- \$8 million over the next two years to provide additional public amenities on both sides of the Fitzroy River, bringing the government's contribution to the Rockhampton Riverbank Redevelopment to \$29.1 million
- \$10 million contribution to the \$45 million Flinders Parade foreshore development in Gladstone
- Brisbane Valley Rail Trail—161 kilometres of trail along the old Brisbane Valley rail line
- Boonah to Ipswich Trail—74 kilometres of multi-use recreation trails
- Maroochy River Trail—new disabled access facilities along the Maroochy River on the Sunshine Coast
- recognising the multiple public recreation values of the Glen Rock Regional Park near Gatton, by designating it as a state forest.

Urban greenspace

Efforts are ongoing to address the identified shortfall in urban greenspace in the state capital and other urban centres, for example:

- development of the \$12 million Kangaroo Point Cliffs Park
- dedication of four hectares of surplus state-owned land at Indooroopilly as riverfront parklands
- partnering in the acquisition and development of the 24 hectare Robelle Domain Parklands in the new centre of Springfield in Ipswich.



New urban greenspace

As an outcome of the Queensland Growth Management Summit, the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) was tasked with facilitating the delivery of major new satellite communities in priority greenfield areas. The ULDA is now responsible for overseeing the planning and development of urban development including areas; Ripley Valley, Yarrabilba, Greater Flagstone and Caloundra South which, when combined, will deliver approximately 5500 hectares of greenspace for environmental protection and public enjoyment.

This is a significant improvement over past development practices and reflects the government's strong commitment to strategic, integrated land use and infrastructure planning and development supported by the timely provision of community facilities such as parks, schools, employment centres and public transport.

A good example of this enhanced recognition of the benefits of urban greenspace is the ULDA's Fitzgibbon Chase development in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. This new urban development area will ultimately deliver approximately 160 hectares of parklands, representing over 50 per cent of the development area.

Partnerships

Local governments continue to play a leading role by ensuring greenspace is dedicated for community use through park acquisition and management. Industry and community groups are also key greenspace partners. Many communities willingly contribute to a range of green and environmental levies raised by local governments to acquire bushlands and open space.



The Queensland Greenspace Strategy provides the framework to encourage further collaboration across government, industry and the community so we can continue to work together to maintain and improve Queensland's community greenspace networks for the benefit of present and future generations.

The greenspace strategy will also deliver on the Toward Q2 ambitions to ensure a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland. In particular, the strategy complements the green ambition to increase the area of national parks and land for public recreation.

What will the Queensland Greenspace Strategy do?

The greenspace vision

Queensland's growing communities are supported by networks of diverse, high-quality community greenspace to cater for a range of community and environmental needs.

Supporting growing communities

The government's management of Queensland's growth through new and more compact communities is supported by delivering accessible greenspace in and around growing urban centres.

Meeting the challenge

Delivery of the vision acknowledges the scale of the challenge in meeting Queensland's growing need for greenspace and the finite resources available to deliver on this need.

Responding to greenspace demands

Greenspace is provided based on the needs of particular communities to access a range of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Collaborating with local government

Local governments are recognised as major greenspace providers through a partnership arrangement with state government to acquire and manage greenspace.

Making the best use of resources

Acquiring and maintaining additional greenspace is resourced through co-funding arrangements, partnering with the private sector and community organisations and the alignment of government programs.

Strengthening greenspace planning

Strategic greenspace outcomes are incorporated into the state's planning framework.

Strategic directions

To respond to the key challenge of population growth, the Queensland Greenspace Strategy focuses on coordinating those strategies, plans and programs most likely to secure more greenspace to protect our lifestyles and environment into the future.

Mechanisms include the direct acquisition or allocation of land; and working across governments and communities to provide more recreation opportunities on land with suitable values.

The development of regional greenspace network plans will be a key planning tool to identify and secure the preferred future network of community greenspace to meet the needs of a growing state.

Simply securing large areas of land is not the whole answer. Community greenspace needs to be located close to where people live and used for a range of activities.

It also needs to be cost effective to develop and maintain. Planning for community greenspace needs to capitalise on collocation with community facilities and the connectivity of bikeways and walking trails.

In urban areas where residential densities are increasing, community greenspace needs to integrate with urban sub-tropical design, taking advantage of our Queensland climate to provide seamless connections between the outdoors and the built environment.



Photo: MWA Viewfinder



Photo: Melanie Doheny

Strategic direction

1.

Secure more greenspace for public recreation

The Queensland Government is already securing greenspace across the state for community use and enjoyment and for a range of other functions such as nature conservation and natural resource management.

It is acknowledged that the direct costs of purchasing land can be substantial. In the context of economic responsibility, the strategy recognises there are a number of other ways to secure community greenspace. A key mechanism is to work with existing and emerging government programs to deliver community greenspace outcomes.

The following programs and strategies will be targeted to enhance community greenspace outcomes through co-investment and collaboration:

- *Koala Response Strategy*
- new urban development areas being delivered by the ULDA
- government land policy (surplus state land)
- unallocated state land disposal program
- state infrastructure projects
- state development areas
- regional planning program
- *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2010*

- *South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Strategy 2007–11*
- *Rural Futures Strategy for South East Queensland 2009*
- *South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan 2009–2031.*



Photo: MWA Viewfinder

Koalas and community greenspace

The Queensland Government's Koala Response Strategy seeks to ensure a net gain in koala habitat in SEQ by 2020. The Queensland Greenspace Strategy will help to deliver this target by ensuring that community greenspace secured in SEQ optimises koala habitat values, where possible. This is a good example of how the greenspace strategy will help to coordinate outcomes across different programs.

Major infrastructure projects

The Queensland Coordinator-General will continue to investigate and deliver community greenspace as part of major infrastructure projects administered under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. This was the mechanism used to deliver the new 5000 hectare Mount Joyce Escape Recreation Park alongside the Wyaralong Dam in SEQ.



Meeting demand in South East Queensland

The highest demand for new community greenspace in the state will remain within SEQ for the next 30 to 40 years. The population in the south west sector of SEQ is predicted to grow by around 50 per cent by 2031.

The delivery of new regional facilities in this sector, such as the Boonah to Ipswich Trail, the Mount Joyce Escape Recreation Park and the Queensland Moto Park, along with declaration of the Glen Rock State Forest, will help to meet this growing demand.

Landscapes near Ipswich and Logan cities will be assessed for the potential to create additional regional parks and trails. Lands along the Brisbane and Logan river corridors and in the hills and ranges north and south of Flinders Peak have already been identified as a high priority for assessment.

Future demand from other urban growth areas will be assessed as part of ongoing regional assessments of community greenspace values.



Photo: Department of Environment and Resource Management

Active Trails – meeting the demand for active living

The Queensland Government is developing recreation trails as part of a network of trails across the state:

- Maroochy River Trail
- Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail
- Boonah to Ipswich Trail
- Brisbane Valley Rail Trail
- Great Walks of Queensland:
 - Carnarvon
 - Conondale Range
- Cooloola
- Fraser Island
- Gold Coast Hinterland
- Mackay Highlands
- Sunshine Coast Hinterland
- Wet Tropics
- Whitsunday.

The government will capitalise on this success by continuing to work with local governments to investigate and deliver more trails, including a new rail trail linking Kingaroy to Theebine.

More than 80 per cent of all outdoor recreation activities relate to walking and cycling. Trails are a highly cost effective way to encourage active lifestyles.

Lookouts – viewing our beautiful scenery

Scenic lookouts are one of the best and easiest ways for people to appreciate the wide open spaces of Queensland. Starting with SEQ, investigations will be made to assess the options for expanding the number of scenic viewing points and improving access to established lookouts.

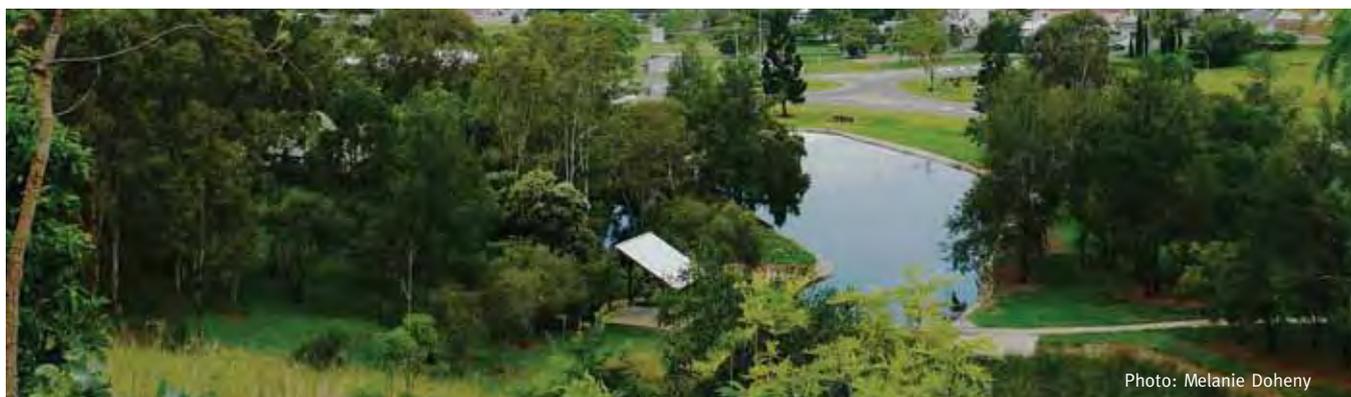


Photo: Melanie Doheny



2.

Improve greenspace outcomes through Queensland's planning framework

The role of Queensland's planning framework is to support and direct the use and management of land and water to ensure that development is ecologically sustainable for the benefit of Queenslanders now and in the future.

Community greenspace is one type of community infrastructure to be provided along with the

other infrastructure that supports communities like roads, water supplies and power.

To improve certainty and consistency, a series of regional greenspace network plans will be developed for key growth regions across the state, including South East Queensland, Wide Bay Burnett and Far North Queensland.

Other growth areas to be addressed in the future will include Townsville, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Mackay.

To encourage wide stakeholder support and ownership, greenspace network plans will be developed collaboratively by state agencies, local government, industry and community groups.

See Figure 3 for a map of the current community greenspace network in SEQ.



Photo: Gillian Duncan

Greenspace network plans

Greenspace network plans will help to manage growth by improving certainty and consistency and by clarifying the strategic direction for community greenspace at the regional scale.

Greenspace network plans will be collaboratively developed for key growth regions to:

- identify the existing regional community greenspace network
- guide strategic planning for community greenspace.

Planning principles

No net loss

Where greenspace is unavoidably affected by essential development or infrastructure, additional greenspace is to be secured to offset the loss.

Ecosystem services

The capacity of regional greenspace to supply ecosystem services should be protected and enhanced through careful planning and best practice management.

Connectivity

An integrated greenspace network connects:

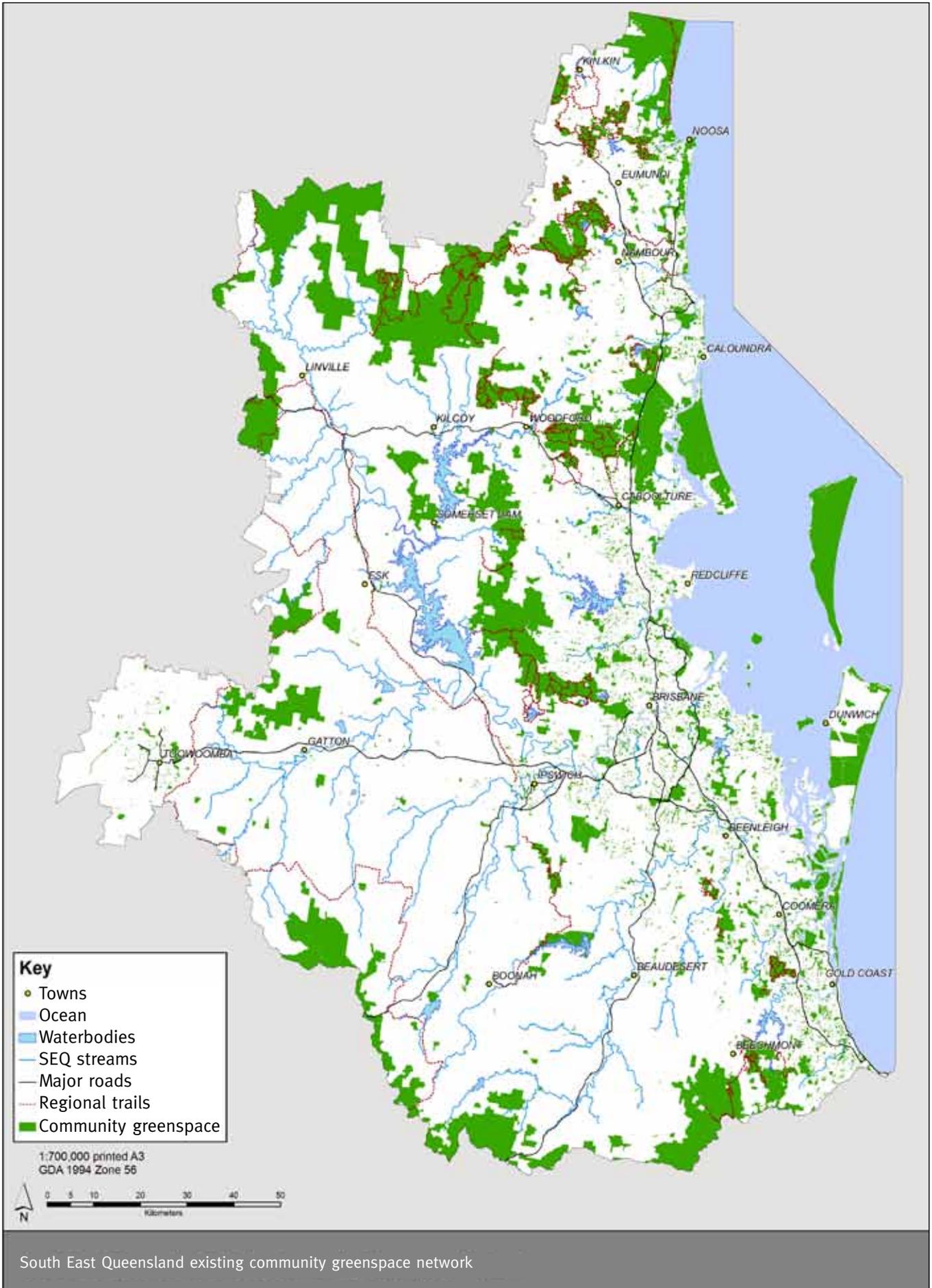
- urban and rural communities
- land and water
- people and places
- fragmented landscapes.

Community engagement

As the providers and custodians of greenspace, the values and aspirations of agencies, landholders, Traditional Owners and local communities should be recognised and respected.



Figure 3: South East Queensland existing community greenspace network





As lead agency for greenspace network plans, the Department of Local Government and Planning will ensure that the state's interest in community greenspace, as expressed in statutory regional plans, is taken into account in local planning and development assessment, including community planning and major infrastructure developments.

Statutory regional plans will continue to protect and preserve greenspace by designating urban footprints and regulating subdivision and development in greenspace areas outside urban footprints. The Minister for Local Government will reserve the right to call in any application where the state's interests in community greenspace are in dispute.

Urban greenspace

A key challenge is to provide greenspace for people in growth areas that balances community and environmental needs with the increasing density of urban living.

Urban community greenspace planning will recognise that attributes such as quality, functionality, diversity of settings, accessibility, efficiency, land use context, community involvement and innovative urban design as well as size, all have a role to play in producing the right outcomes for the community.

Urban greenspace—balancing growth

Redevelopment of inner city sites for community greenspace is expensive, but the benefits to city residents, workers and visitors are substantial and long lasting, for example the parklands at Roma Street and South Bank in the Brisbane CBD. In a similar way, the government will test the feasibility of re-designing part of the Mayne Railyards at Bowen Hills, Brisbane to allow for the development of major new inner city community greenspace.

A guideline outlining the standards for the provision and design of parks in urban development areas was released in conjunction with development schemes for Ripley Valley, Yarrabilba, Greater Flagstone and Caloundra South in late 2011. The ULDA will use the guideline to deliver integrated, high quality community greenspace networks that cater for a range of environmental and recreational needs.

Greening our inter-urban breaks

The Queensland Growth Management Summit identified a key initiative to transform the breaks between urban areas in key locations (including former canelands) into major new greenspace and outdoor recreation opportunities. Inter-urban breaks in SEQ are buffers to urban sprawl and are protected from further urban development and fragmentation by the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031*. In some areas, rural industries, such as cane growing, are in economic transition and this initiative will investigate options to consolidate fragmented rural lands and diversify land uses to deliver a better future for rural communities on the urban fringe.



Photo: Briony Masters

3.

Facilitate better access to state and private land for recreation

Optimising the use of state land for public recreation

State-owned land will be assessed to identify opportunities to deliver more community greenspace in key locations. State lands, including unallocated state land, unformed roads, stock routes, waterways, cemeteries, caravan parks, camping sites, utility corridors and community purpose reserves will be assessed for potential inclusion in community greenspace networks.

As part of the *Toward Q2–Target Delivery Plan 2010–11*, a statewide inventory of both state and local government land for public recreation was conducted, enabling the collation of information on the existing baseline for the first time.

State school playing fields—a local community resource

A pilot program involving 40 schools in 2010–11 investigated ways to improve and streamline community access to state school sports fields. This information will help to roll out similar programs for providing better access to local community greenspace in high growth areas.

Encouraging outdoor recreation opportunities on private land

There is potential for a range of outdoor recreation activities to be provided on suitable, privately-owned land with the approval of the landowner and any necessary planning and other approvals. This could include camping, bushwalking, horse riding, mountain bike riding, trail bike riding and four-wheel driving.

This would offer the dual benefits of providing increased recreational opportunities for regional communities and an additional and diversified source of income for landowners with flow-on benefits to local communities.

The award winning *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2010* delivers new guidelines for rural landowners on the development of outdoor recreation and tourism enterprises.



Photo: Department of Environment and Resource Management



Photo: Tourism Queensland

Implementation

Implementation of the Queensland Greenspace Strategy will be led by the Department of Local Government and Planning. It will fall within the broad implementation framework for Toward Q2 targets and regional planning programs.

Stakeholder coordination

The strategy recognises the critical role of local government in the acquisition and management of greenspace. Partnerships with state agencies, local governments, industry, community, Regional Landscape and Open Space Advisory Committee and other advisory groups will help to implement the strategy.

Greenspace Action Plan

The strategy will be supported by an annual Greenspace Action Plan. The Greenspace Action Plan for 2011–12 incorporates the key community greenspace initiatives from the Queensland Growth Management Summit.

In 2011–12, the greenspace strategy will:

- deliver new recreational facilities valued at over \$43 million
- complete the existing regional trails program
- complete the state schools' community greenspace project
- deliver greenspace network plans for sustainable growth regions.

Action plans will be annually updated and made available from the Department of Local Government and Planning website at www.dlgp.qld.gov.au.

Q2 Target Delivery Plan

The Toward Q2 Target Delivery Plan program and State of the Region reporting will be used to evaluate the progress of the Queensland Greenspace Strategy. The *Target Delivery Plan 2011–12* at www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/statewide-planning/target-delivery-plan and the *SEQ State of the Region Technical Report 2008* at www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/state-of-the-region-report-2008 are available for download.

Parks 4 People

As part of the Toward Q2 program, the Queensland Government has committed to a greenspace target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020.

In order to achieve the target, a statewide register of land for public recreation has been established for the first time in Queensland. This information is to be available through a dedicated Parks 4 People website where the public can use interactive maps to find local parks or generate summary reports at a local, regional or state level.

Feedback is encouraged as part of an ongoing process to improve the quality and richness of the data. This information helps to plan for community greenspace in growing communities and helps Queenslanders enjoy an active, outdoor lifestyle.

Further information

For further information, please contact the greenspace planning team in the Department of Local Government and Planning on **07 3227 8548** or visit www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/greenspace.

Back cover photos:

(left to right)

Photo: Tourism Queensland
Photo: Tourism Queensland



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